

**PHYLLONORYCTER PLATANI (STAUDINGER, 1870)
(LEPIDOPTERA: GRACILLARIIDAE) NEW TO BRITAIN**

A.M. EMMET

Labrey Cottage, Victoria Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 3AF

IN RECENT autumns it has become easy to recognise a microlepidopterist when he is walking in the streets of London. His eyes are cast down as he scrupulously searches the carpet of plane leaves beneath his feet for the mines of *Phyllonorycter platani*. This is a native of south-eastern Europe but, like its relative *P. leucographella* (Zeller), it has steadily been extending its range northwards and westwards and its arrival in Britain was deemed to be just a matter of time.

The car park of Imperial College, London, where the Annual Exhibition of the British Entomological & Natural History Society was held on the 27th October 1990, is shaded by plane-trees. On disembarking there, I adopted the behaviour pattern of my kind and at once astounded my companions by executing an octogenarian war dance whilst brandishing a leaf aloft and chanting "New to Britain!". I duly placed the mined leaf, appropriately annotated, amongst the exhibits.

The post-exhibition field meeting used to be one of the most popular events in the Society's calendar, often being attended by 30 - 40 members. Now, sadly, it has been discontinued, but 1990 saw its revival: the Annual Exhibition was to become exhibition and field meeting all in one. Out trooped the microlepidopterists to the car park and, when that proved unproductive, they migrated onwards to the garden surrounding the British Museum (Natural History). There the mines were found in some plenty, mainly in leaves that were still on the trees and within a man's reach. I was unable to join this expedition but was kindly presented with their prize find, a single leaf bearing no fewer than eight mines.

Since then, mines have been found elsewhere in the neighbourhood and also at Kew Gardens. This is not surprising, since many of the leaves swept up from the London streets are taken to Kew to make compost.

I hope to write a more substantial article next spring when the moths have emerged, giving a full description of them and of their early stages. However, since my discovery has already received such widespread publicity, a preliminary notice seems desirable.

**Hitherto unreported foodplants for *Simyra albovenosa* (Goeze)
(Lep.: Noctuidae).**

The catholic tastes of this species in captivity are well known e.g. Allan (1949) and Heath & Emmet (1983) quote *Salix cinerea*, *S. repens* and *Rhamnus catharticus* as suitable foodplants for rearing. In addition, Skinner (1984) notes that broad-leaved grasses are also accepted. However, in the wild *Phragmites australis* is the more usual foodplant, though Heath